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Remembering our radical roots: an argument against the corporate capture of Pride. **page 6**

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GROUNDCOVER 15

15 YEARS OF NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP | WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICH.

Four dogs waiting for vaccine services at the Humane Society of Huron Valley's Friends for Life event. Photo submitted.

Become a foster at the Humane Society. **page 10**

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GROUNDCOVER NEWS

PROVIDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-DETERMINED INDIVIDUALS IMPACTED BY POVERTY,
PRODUCING A STREET NEWSPAPER THAT GIVES A PLATFORM TO UNDERREPRESENTED VOICES IN WASHTENAW COUNTY,
PROMOTING AN ACTION TO BUILD A JUST, CARING AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY.

Groundcover News, a 501(c)(3) organization, was founded in April 2010 as a means to empower low-income persons to make the transitions from homeless to housed, and from jobless to employed.

Vendors purchase each copy of our regular editions of Groundcover News at our office for 50 cents. This money goes towards production costs. Vendors work selling the paper on the street for $2, keeping all income and tips from each sale. Vendors are the main contributors to the paper, and are compensated to write and report.

Street papers like Groundcover News exist in cities all over the United States, as well as in more than 40 other countries, in an effort to raise awareness of the plight of homeless people and combat the increase in poverty. Our paper is a proud member of the International Network of Street Papers.

International Network *of* Street Papers

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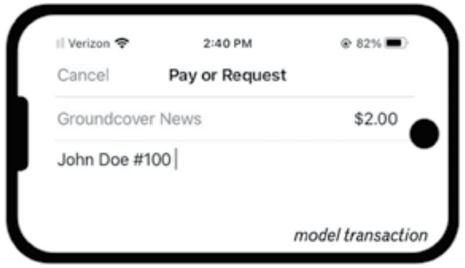

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4. **Advertise** your company, organization, event or resource — see rates below.
5. **Follow us on Facebook and Instagram** — promote our posts and share your favorite articles and vendor interactions.
6. **Donate items** — A seasonally appropriate list of items most needed at our office and on the street is available on our website. Drop off anytime we're open.

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Size	Black/White	Color	Dimensions (W x H in inches)
1/8	$110.00	$150.00	5 X 3 or 2.5 X 6.5
1/6	$145.00	$200.00	5 X 4
1/4	$200.00	$265.00	5 X 6.25
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MEET YOUR VENDOR

Joseph Schreiber, vendor No. 705

In one sentence, who are you?
Just your friendly neighborhood Christian!

Where do you usually sell Groundcover?
By Hyperion in downtown Ann Arbor.

When and why did you start selling Groundcover? Just last month!

What is your favorite thing to do in Ann Arbor?
Read the Word ... preach the Good News of Jesus Christ ...

What is your favorite spot in Ann Arbor? Westgate Library.

What words do you live by?
The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. Psalm 118: 22

What is something about you that someone on the street wouldn't know?
That I was in Seattle Chaz/Chop in 2020.

What motivates you to work hard selling Groundcover News?
I enjoy talking with the friendly folks of beautiful Ann Arbor, Mich.

My guardian angel that I'll always love, Richard

DENISE SHEARER
Groundcover vendor No. 485

Richard Allen Perry used to be my earth angel. Now he's my guardian angel. Nobody or no thing will ever replace him as my partner in life, my BFF and my lovely man.

I really enjoyed him and our friendship when he was my earth angel and BFF. We hardly ever had a harsh word to say to each other. Me and his family get along and like each other, too. They consider me as part of their family. When his sister and her family come to town from New York, I'm always included in the festivities.

Me and Richard would enjoy each other by going to the library and just getting a sandwich from Barry Bagels or Jersey Mike's. When he lived on Stimson we had the best of times together watching movies and eating; sometimes I would cook the meals we would have. I don't think there will ever be another person like Richard and I'm glad I met him in this life. He used to sing to me. And I used to sing to him.

There were a lot of good things about Richard and the good thing now is he is my guardian angel.

Hear Me Out: We need a women-only shelter in A2

STEPHANIE DENT
Groundcover vendor No. 84

Hi, my name is Stephanie Dent and I'm writing to speak about making a women's shelter in Ann Arbor. I'm writing this article because, once when I was homeless, I was kicked out of Delonis Shelter and I did not know how to get to the Purple House. I'm just trying to make change in Ann Arbor while adding another resource for women.

Now we have the Delonis Shelter, and, during the winter, the Purple House and the Men's Rotating Shelter but it would be nice if we can have a women's shelter or make a co-ed shelter just to add another resource, because not everyone can go to Delonis or the Purple House. (And during the summer there are even less resources.) It's just a suggestion.

I want them to at least consider it. This is super important.

People, especially women, choose not to go to Delonis for a couple of reasons. One of them is they may be getting bullied by men which I have experienced personally; or some of them may have been trespassed, same with St. Luke's in Ypsi; the Purple House will still take people who've been trespassed, but there aren't a lot of beds. The resource for women that already exists is Delonis, or Purple House, but we could use an extra resource. They fall short because we put a lot on the Delonis I think because they are one of the main resources in Ann Arbor.

I asked some Groundcover community members what they thought about this. Cindy Gere, Groundcover vendor no. 279, stated, "Women have different needs than men, women have menopausal hormonal issues that need to be addressed along with counseling for a more comprehensive holistic approach to women's health."

Cody, one of my customers, said, "[It would] help the community."

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Campers respond to public accusation of bike theft

LINDSAY CALKA
Publisher

Bike theft is prevalent in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti. Bike theft motivated an article by Ken Parks in the last edition of Groundcover News titled "Surrounded by robbers and thieves." But it wasn't the only headline about bike theft in the local news last week.

After a bike was stolen off the front porch of an Ypsilanti house in the Bell-Kramer neighborhood, Local 4 Click On Detroit released a video news segment reporting on the incident. They included the Ring doorbell camera footage, an interview with Michele Simmons, the owner of the bike, shots of "No Trespassing" signage — and took their camera crew into the encampment across the street, but did not talk to homeless residents.

The basis of the news segment is a *belief* of Simmons that someone from the camp close to her home stole her bike. She cited catching someone taking water from her outdoor faucet weeks prior as corroborating evidence.

The news segment was texted to me by a resident of the camp on the day it was published online, afraid that the bad coverage would result in accelerated removal of their homes.

The motivation of Simmons' media outreach is stated to be getting "more resources" to homeless people at the camp, "because she is afraid the issue she is having could escalate," and that she fears for her life. Earlier this year Simmons gave public comment at Ypsilanti City Council to advocate for such resources.

The Metro Detroit station pursued comments from Ypsilanti Mayor Nicole Brown and Ypsilanti Police about who is responsible for removal and how it could be legally done, to which the former did not comment and the latter suggested a fence.

I soon saw the video again on Facebook where it was shared by the news outlet, decorated with hundreds of comments, some empathizing with the impossibly high rents in Ypsi, others calling out the reporting bias, and many stoking hatred for homeless populations.

Cody Pinchot commented that it was a "big, big assumption that the bicycle theft is related, unless the bike was recovered from the camp or they saw that guy going to and from the camp."

What was missing from the conversation was a response from the people being publicly accused of theft: the homeless residents.

"All of us back here [at the camp] didn't recognize the guy in the video taking the bike from that lady's house. We're upset because it basically got blamed on us. Not everyone that's homeless is bad or a thief or a drug addict," one resident clarified. (Names will be omitted for privacy.)

A former resident at the site commented that over a year ago when he lived there, he remembered seeing multiple unlocked bikes placed where the lawn met the road. "It felt like they were purposely trying to trap us so they could blame something on us and get us kicked out."

"If you want us out of here so bad, *help* us," said another current resident.

The first speaker concluded, "We want the community to respect these peoples' properties. It is important to us being able to stay back here while we have to."

There is no adult, overnight shelter in Ypsilanti. The Delonis Center, operated by the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County in downtown Ann Arbor, only offers drop-in overnight shelter throughout the winter months (mid-November through mid-April).

As Parks points out in his recent essay, we live in "a climate of shortage, even when there is an oversupply." As true as it is for bikes, it is even more accurate for housing. Housing status does not determine who are robbers and thieves.

Donating plasma: side effects may include ...

ANNIKA JULIUSSON
U-M student contributor

Whether you're doing it to save a life or just to get a few extra bucks for rent, donating plasma has the ability to enact real change for those who need it most.

Plasma is the clear fluid found in blood that is used to transport nutrients, hormones and waste throughout the body's system. It is also crucial for maintaining blood pressure and supporting immunity which is lifesaving for many who receive it. While the process of donating remains a crucial support system for those suffering with serious health issues such as blood clots and severe trauma, there are also downsides to the donation process itself. Donating plasma too frequently can be linked to health and hormone issues, and many donation centers still deny services to unhoused individuals even if they are medically cleared.

With many struggling to stay afloat in the United States's current economy, more and more people are forced to find second or even third sources of income. Financial freedom is a priority for many and you simply have to do what you have to do.

NBC News reported that there has been an "almost 13% increase in plasma donation in the last five years." This is due to an increase in the amount donation centers pay volunteers, as well as a higher demand for more immunoglobulin remedies across the nation. Studies also show that there has been an increase in middle-class Americans who are visiting the donation centers, with "people in the U.S. (making) an estimated total of $4.7 billion selling their plasma. Donation centers are popping up in middle-class neighborhoods, including suburban strip malls and college towns."

However, what often gets left out of the conversation is how physically demanding the process can be, especially when it's done regularly.

Studies show that over time, frequent plasma donation can start to take a toll on people's bodies. Some donors have reported substantial weight gain after repeated sessions which can be linked to higher cortisol levels and general bodily strain. The body is trying to replace the nutrients and energy it has lost, and that compensation doesn't always happen in a balanced way.

There are also concerns about hormone disruption. Plasma contains proteins that play a role in regulating different systems in the body, and repeatedly removing it may have effects that aren't fully understood yet. The problem is thate there isn't a lot of long-term research available to donors. Most people are left to figure out what feels "normal" through trial and error.

We also have to acknowledge the fact that when data is being collected, it is often collected from a large pool of male patients. Women have been traditionally under-studied within the medical field and it wouldn't be remiss to say that frequently donating plasma, especially for those already struggling with hormonal irregularities, could trigger greater health issues later on.

"It's like selling your health away," commented James Manning, Groundcover vendor No. 16.

At the same time, not everyone who might want to make a donation is even allowed to. Many plasma centers have strict requirements surrounding things such as identification, address verification and health status (i.e. bloodborne illnesses). A donor cannot have a congregate shelter as their address. Because of these criteria, many people experiencing homelessness are turned away from some donation centers. The reasoning is usually framed around safety and regulation, but the result is that people who may need the money the most are excluded from accessing it.

It also begs the question as to how often medical stigma has been a barrier to saving a life. The Red Cross Association reported that, "Nearly 10,000 units are needed daily in the United States to create treatments that cannot be replicated in a lab." Additionally, it was only as of 2023 that gay and bisexual men in the U.S were able to donate blood because of the stigma surrounding HIV. At the end of the day, are we really in a position to turn away opportunities for life-saving treatment?

Octapharma, located on W. Michigan Ave, adheres to all U.S. FDA guidelines, which permit two plasma donations within a seven-day period, with at least 48 hours in between donations.

For many, donating plasma is a necessary option and sometimes one of the few ways one can make extra money. However, it's still worthwhile to be honest about what it takes both physically and mentally to endure the process frequently. When a system relies on people's financial needs while placing limits on who can participate and offering little clarity about long-term effects, it stops looking like a simple exchange.

summertime **FESTIVALS**

DEXTER MUSIC IN THE PARK
Fridays, May 29-August 28, 6:30 p.m. Monument Park (located at the apex of Main and Central Streets), Dexter. *Dexter Chamber of Commerce's Summer outdoor concert series.*

ANNUAL TASTE OF ANN ARBOR
Sunday, May 31, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m., Main St. between William and Washington Streets. *A chance to taste entrees and desserts from more than 30 downtown restaurants and cafes. Also, kids' activities and live music TBA. Free admission. Food tickets, $1 each (items range from 1-6 tickets each).Presented by the Main Street Area Association.*

SONIC LUNCH
Thursdays, June 4- August 27, 11:30 a.m.- 1 p.m., Liberty Plaza, Ann Arbor. *Bank of Ann Arbor's free summer outdoor concert series. Each Sonic Lunch features a live band from an impressive array of talent in the region, as well as national and international acts. Each week, lunch will be available on-site for purchase from a local vendor. Concerts are free and suitable for all ages. Seating is available but lawn chairs are welcome. See summer line-up at* soniclunch.com/2026-lineup

ANN ARBOR SUMMER STREETS
Thursday-Saturday, June 4-September 28. Downtown Ann Arbor. *Street closures start at 4 p.m. Thursday. Ann Arbor's vibrant summer celebration brought to you by the Main Street Area Association! Outdoor dining in the street and arts, music and culture activities for all ages.*

DEPOT TOWN CRUISE NIGHTS
Thursdays, June 4-August 27, 5-8 p.m. East Cross St. DepotTown, Ypsilanti. *Classic and special interest car cruise. Park on the street and enjoy a variety of food and shopping, hula hoop contest and giveaways for the kids, and a great DJ. There'll be dancing in the streets!*

SOUNDS AND SIGHTS
Thursdays, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Historic Downtown Chelsea. June 4-July 30. *Arts, entertainment, and musical acts are performed at 10 various and separate stages throughout historical downtown Chelsea. Every week brings something new, is family friendly and free! See full line-up at* chelseamich.com/sstn/

FIRST FRIDAYS YPSI
First Friday of the month April-December, 5-11p.m. Downtown, DepotTown, and in the West Cross Street Ypsilanti districts. June 4-July 30. *A self guided art and culture walk around the city of Ypsilanti! Art, shopping, food, music and fun! June theme: Rainbow Ypsi. July theme: We the People of Ypsilanti.*

A2 AFRICAN AMERICAN FESTIVAL
Saturday, June 6, 9 a.m.-8 p.m. E. Ann and N. Main Streets (behind the Washtenaw County Courthouse), Ann Arbor. *Join us for a day filled with music, food, art and culture celebrating the African American community in Ann Arbor. We'll have free activities for the kiddos until 5 pm. Free entry for all ages. Bring lawn chairs to relax and hear the entertainment.*

ANN ARBOR SUMMERFEST (A2SF)
June 12-28. Tuesday through Saturday starting at 5 p.m., and Sunday starting at 4 p.m. Washington Street and Ingalls Mall, Ann Arbor. *The June festival offers two concurrent series. The outdoor centerpiece at Top of the Park offers admission-free concerts, movies, open-air spectacles and unique family attractions held along a beautiful U-M campus green. The indoor, ticketed series features world-class music, dance, contemporary circus and comedy.* www.a2sf.org

YPSILANTI ANNUAL JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION
Thursday-Sunday, June 18-21. University Bank Commerce Center, 301 W. Michigan Ave, Ypsilanti. *A weekend of liberation, unity, culture and community! See weekend schedule of events on Facebook.*

ANN ARBOR ART FAIR
Thursday, July 16, 10 a.m- 9 p.m. Friday, July 17, 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. Saturday, July 18, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. *The largest juried art fair nationwide, showcasing the talents of nearly 1,000 artists, spanning an impressive 30-city-block footprint throughout downtown Ann Arbor. Features three unique, independently juried, nonprofit art fairs, all operating concurrently: Ann Arbor Street Art Fair, The Original; The Guild's Ann Arbor Summer Art Fair; Ann Arbor State Street District Art Fair.*

YPSI PRIDE
Saturday, July 18, 2-10 p.m. Depot Town Ypsilanti. *Join for full day and evening of LGBTQIA+ focused events, sales and performances. All ages welcome. 2026 theme: Above and Beyond. Ypsi Pride kicks off Pride Month with a free, space-themed "Space Rave" Pre-Party on Friday, June 5. The event runs from 5-10 p.m. at the Freighthouse in Depot Town (100 Market Place).*

JOHN E LAWRENCE SUMMER JAZZ FESTIVAL
Fridays, July 31-August 28, 7-9 p.m. Ford Lake Park, 9075 S Huron River Dr. Ypsilanti. *Free smooth jazz concerts. Bring your own lawn chair and blankets and coolers. $20 parking fee if driving. Free admission. See muscian lineup at* www.johnelawrencejazz.com

ANN ARBOR PRIDE
Saturday, August 1, all day. Main and Liberty Streets, downtown Ann Arbor. *Over 200 vendors, two stages with performances all day. Family-friendly programming, including Kids Zone, ends at 6 p.m. See schedule at* annarborpride.com

SUMMERFEST/JOE DULIN DAY
Saturday, August 22, 12-6 p.m. Parkridge Park, 791 Harriet Street, Ypsilanti. *Vendors and non-profit organizations including Michigan Medicine, a children's area and great entertainment!*

4TH ANNUAL MICHIGAN MOTORFEST
Saturday, August 29, at the Wayne County Fairgrounds, Belleville. *We're bringing together classic cars, modern muscle, vendors, food trucks, and car clubs from across Michigan.* www.michiganmotorfest.com

Expect to see Groundcover News vendors selling at many of these local festivals!

Submit an event to be featured in the next edition: submissions@groundcovernews.com

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Find summer STEM, adventure, and fun at YDL! From June 6 to August 23, earn points every time you read or listen to books, learn something at a library program, or explore the library and community on your own. Sign up to track your points and earn prizes at ypsilibrary.org/summer.

FEATURED EVENT
SECOND SATURDAY CINEMA
Jun 13 | Jul 11 | Aug 8 |
8:30-11:30pm | YDL-Whittaker
We'll have a children's activity or craft starting at 8:30pm, and fun, family-friendly movies will begin at 9pm on our giant blow-up screen. The Friends of YDL will sell popcorn, or you can bring your own snacks (no alcohol). Pack a blanket or chair. See you at the movies!
Jun 13: Ratatouille
Jul 11: National Treasure
Aug 8: A League of Their Own

YPSILANTI DISTRICT LIBRARY

Remembering our radical roots: an argument against the corporate capture of Pride

GUY ORON
Real Change

Real Change is a street paper located in Seattle, Wash.

In the last weekend of June, hundreds of thousands of people will flock to Seattle to celebrate over 50 years of continuous Pride celebrations. This year also marks 57 years since the Stonewall riots, the famed uprising that launched the modern queer rights movement.

These weighty milestones draw attention to the rich history of the trans, queer, lesbian and gay people in the United States. They also bring to mind the apparent clash between contemporary festivities and past scenes of hardship, of a time when the right to be yourself had to be asserted against a backdrop of police repression.

Indeed, TV representation of queer people is at an all-time high in the decade since the U.S. Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage. Corporations and brands now rush to produce rainbow logos and merchandise every June. A survey by the polling firm Gravity Research found that 78% of Fortune 500 executives were still planning on rolling out Pride month-related campaigns this year, despite a recent right-wing backlash.

The increase in commercial marketability is also echoed in the realm of political representation: the LGBTQ+ Victory Institute estimates at least 1,288 queer electeds hold office today, and Seattle has had two white queer mayors in the last decade.

But both in the United States and across the world, the progression toward liberation has been extremely uneven within the community. Queer youth are still disproportionately likely to experience homelessness: a February 2024 survey published by the Washington Department of Commerce found that more than one in 10 unaccompanied homeless youth identified as LGBTQ+, while one in 25 were trans or gender expansive. Respondents stressed in interviews that these statistics were a significant undercount, and that queer youth of color were more likely than straight, cisgender and/or white youth to be homeless.

These disparities are also replicated in terms of economic inequality. In 2022, the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis reported that, while 68% of straight adults owned homes, only 52% of gay and bisexual men owned homes, while lesbians had a homeownership rate of 51%. Nationally, only 36% of transgender and gender-nonconforming people owned a home. Black and Latina trans women are also more likely to experience both poverty and direct violence than their cisgender and white counterparts.

This widening inequality within the queer community creates a sense of unease that undermines the very notion of a shared experience. After all, how can people who come from the same purported group have such drastically different experiences? Meanwhile, recent years have seen a rise in reactionary sentiments, such as conservative boycotts of brands like Bud Light, which lost an estimated $1.4 billion in sales after partnering with trans influencer Dylan Mulvaney in a 2023 advertisement.

The Bud Light boycott points to a fundamental weakness in the popular representation of queer people: increasingly, people interpret Pride and what it means to be LGBTQ+ through a prism of brands and marketing. This inclination presents a twofold danger of flattening the queer community into caricatures and of limiting the possibilities of who we can imagine ourselves to be.

This is where the act of studying history can be particularly powerful — so much of what we encounter today was faced before by our elders and ancestors in the queer liberation movement.

A diversity of political currents

When we read queer history, we also learn that there have always been varying political currents within the queer community and clashing opinions about how to best fight for liberation. Some activists stressed the importance of mainstream recognition and acceptance, while others eschewed conformity. Several LGBTQ+ organizations recognized the importance of joint struggle along the lines of race, class and gender, while others maintained an exclusive vision of fighting solely for queer rights.

Seattle is no exception to this complex history. In 1966, middle-class, white gay men founded the Dorian Society, the first explicitly "homophile" organization in the city, which advocated for the repeal of discriminatory laws. One of the group's primary methods was to represent gay men in the media as respectable, good citizens, just like straight people.

One year after the Stonewall uprising, the Seattle chapter of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) was formed. The national group was established shortly after the riots and had a very different perspective from the Dorian Society on how to achieve freedom. The GLF collaborated with contemporaries like the Black Panther Party and included membership of Black and Latina trans women like Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera.

On a national scale, the emergence of the gay rights struggle coincided with protests against the Vietnam War. As JSTOR Daily writer Matthew Willis documents, these anti-war demonstrations featured some of the first visible contingents of out gay men and helped define the fledgling queer liberation movement. "[A]ntiwar politics brought gay liberation out of the political closet," Willis wrote.

The focus on joint struggle organizing continued well into the 1980s. To commemorate the 15-year anniversary of the Stonewall uprising, Seattle Pride organizers adopted a 12-point platform calling for, among other things, "an end to homophobia, sexism, racism, classism and ageism," and the redirection of "US tax dollars away from military buildup and back into the social services."

As AIDS became a full-blown emergency, new groups like ACT UP formed to end the stigma around the disease, launching a grassroots sexual health education campaign, providing mutual aid and holding dramatic direct actions to call attention to the devastation of the epidemic. Faced with state neglect and demonization from the right wing, queer people had to create their own networks of care to survive.

Nonprofits established during the crisis, like Seattle's LGBTQ Center, still serve queer and trans people today, providing free STI screenings, gender-affirming care and peer mentorship. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and Mpox outbreak, these groups sprang into action once again to fill the gaps where governments failed to adequately respond.

The devastation of the AIDS epidemic touched everyone in the queer community. In King County alone, 3,276 people — the vast majority of whom were queer men and trans women — died from AIDS-related complications between 1983 and 1996. Ahmoy L., a member of the anti-imperialist organization Sông2Sea and a passionate student of queer history, argues that the AIDS crisis marked a turning point in the queer community.

"If you are going to understand anything about queer history here in the United States, you have to look at the AIDS crisis," Ahmoy said. "The '60s and '70s was a time of radical protest and queerness as well. … People really felt like things were getting better for queer trans people … and Black folks as well with the Civil Rights Movement. It was a time of fighting really hard with revolutionary optimism."

In the wake of the crisis, Ahmoy said that the queer liberation movement polarized around two groups. On the left was a progressive camp that wanted to focus on the fight for universal healthcare and other socioeconomic rights, while on the right, a conservative camp coalesced around the struggle for same-sex marriage and assimilation into heteronormative society. In the end, the latter group won out.

But even as the mainstream political trajectory of the queer liberation movement bent toward legal equality and integration, many voices called for a different approach. In his 2011 book "Normal Life," Seattle legal scholar Dean Spade wrote that trans people cannot achieve true freedom without addressing poverty, criminalization and the underlying structures of capitalism and prisons that enable them.

In the early 2010s, Spade and other Seattleites formed the Seattle chapter of Queers Against Israeli Apartheid (QuAIA), a grassroots collective that protested against Israel's military occupation of Palestine and its impacts particularly on queer Palestinians. Activists with QuAIA popularized the term "pinkwashing" to refer to the use of pro-LGBTQ+ attitudes to cover up human rights abuses and exploitation. This framework has since been applied to a number of other contexts, including corporations trying to "rainbow-wash" their brand. This history of queer anti-war activism has only intensified since the start of the war on Gaza, with many proclaiming the slogan "no Pride in genocide."

In Seattle, the 2020 Black Lives Matter uprising against police brutality resurfaced longstanding unease between the queer community and SPD, with many organizers becoming deeply involved in the Defund SPD movement. Citing the long history of cops participating in the criminalization of queer people, Seattle Pride banned SPD officers from participating in the main Pride parade while in uniform in 2022. These concerns were

see **SEATTLE** page 16

How do I find pride within the most sick, bloodthirsty empire on earth?

JAY COOPER
Groundcover contributor

Trigger warning: suicide, sexual abuse of children, slavery, war and all that entails, and the other T-slur.

Pride can be a petard for hoisting ourselves upon, simultaneously, sin and virtue. Pride contains confidence, power and health. It also contains arrogance, self-mythologizing and delusions of supremacy. Pride is often at the heart of evil men. Men who are bombing children, who are raping children, who are draining every resource from every person in the world, often do it with pride. They do it to puff out their chest and say, "I have the biggest spaceship." The soldiers they send overseas to slaughter and be slaughtered need to believe they're "bringing stability to the region" — despite all evidence they're doing the opposite — so they can kill with pride.

Some of my queered siblings are surely already annoyed at me using the term sin because organized religion has weaponized pride against us. Behind and beyond the hateful legislation, the medical abuse, the street and economic violence against queer people is so often religious rhetoric about how our love, our identity, our existence is a sin. Gay-bashers take pride in being in the in-group. They must believe they are "God's chosen people" to justify their utter inhumanity, to carry out genocide with pride.

Pride in being born within the empire, being "an American," drives the arrogance, exceptionalism and negligence that allow people to not only sit idly by while our government slaughters the world, but to actually convince themselves it is just.

Jarheads (Marines) take pride in being abused, brainwashed cannon fodder. Nazis take pride in imagined histories of supremacy to justify the unearned privilege they enjoy within this crumbling empire.

The empire encourages and rewards queered people who take pride in being "one of the good ones." Transmedicalists take pride in having been diagnosed by the hateful machine that queers us and in getting the appropriate surgery to fit cleanly into the white supremacist binary. How many times have you heard a queered person say that their own category of queered people ought to act better in line with the expectations of white supremacists?

So why do we strive for pride every year? To be queered and embarrassed is to be crushed, suffocated. To be queered and confident is to be a star. If pride breathes the breath of confidence into you, it keeps you alive. Many opt to be isolated, because maintaining confidence is exhausting. If the only benefits of celebrating the anniversary of the 1969 Stonewall rebellion every year were to recharge and bolster each other's energy, it would still be worth it.

Last year at Ypsi Pride I cried in the street. I don't remember doing much else, just taking in the scene and crying in the street. I was about to be homeless and I thought it would be the last time I'd ever see a Pride celebration, and the scenes of people living their lives with happiness moved me. I was crying, looking at how far we'd come, standing in the streets being our queer selves, never forgetting the war machine was coming for us.

The empire is sick, regardless of how far we've come. I did not grow up with Pride celebrations. I grew up fighting. Still today my safety is at risk when an intoxicated homophobe or a predator gets a whiff of my queerness. I've learned to navigate it through blood and tears.

Growing up the fight was hopping in the car with a baseball bat because across town a hate mob had surrounded a boy I barely knew, who would later move to Alaska and lose his head to a shotgun blast. The fight was getting pulled out of class by security for dressing femme. The fight was surviving the predators that saw me as easy prey. Suicides, overdoses, carrying a knife in case you got jumped in the parking lot, losing friends to the nazi hate machine.

Queer liberation is an inter-generational struggle. Lessons learned, abuses suffered. The qualities that make us queered change, but the fight remains. So long as folk are queered, so long as folk are made an out-group, the fight remains. There's little difference whether someone is queered for their sexual preferences, the way their mind processes information, the abilities of their bodies, or the colors of their skin, except in the angles of attack.

It's deliberate that queer folk are pushed to the unprotected fringes where violence happens. The white supremacist machine queers us so its in-group can have pride in being not us. Police protect the machine; queer folk, folk who have been made out-group, are treated as property of the police. Civilized folk, folk who take pride in being "law-abiding citizens," sit idly by and watch the police beat, kidnap, and kill us. They will soon realize the definition of good citizen is shifting under their feet.

They called people who look Hispanic "illegal," and people let them be treated as property of ICE. They said people who look Chinese are spies, and people let them be treated as property of the feds. They say Trans people are pedophile groomers, so nazis can take pride in killing us.

In reality we know the empire protects pedophile groomers, and via the weaponized shame of queering, via marginalization into an out-group, because of the closeting and secrecy that creates, Trans kids are often their victims. If there's one reason to have pride, it's to combat the shame, to live without embarrassment around who you are, to remember that we are all equal.

I didn't have Pride celebrations growing up, Pride was a thing in far-off cities that maybe weren't so backward. I had Anonymous.

Technological anticensorship and technological secrecy, used not only by the oppressed, but also by the grotesque. The parts of the internet made "clean" for mass audiences are censored heavily by moderators. Those people, who censor the internet for you, who have to look at the things that get flagged as gross, evil, traumatizing, and criminal, are suffering.

The uncensored dark web encompasses the sites and protocols where anyone can say anything, where nothing can be censored, the places where every effort is made to anonymize everyone. Those places where no one suffers to shield you from the truth show how evil humanity can be.

I know that whenever there's conflict that sends refugees running from their homes, there's sex slavery because I've seen the pictures of mothers and daughters chained to basement walls in the auction threads. It's not abstract to me. It's clear as day, burned into my memory.

I learned steganography technology watching pedophiles teach each other how to place zip files of child-pornography inside meme images right in front of my face. Encryption, anonymity, unrestricted speech; these tools are as useful to predators as they are to the oppressed, same as pride.

Anonymous was no one and anyone. Anonymous was anybody with the technical know-how to become anonymous. If you could find the thread, get on the thread, participate in the thread, and not have it trace back to you, you were anon. People would ask "How do I join Anonymous?" They misunderstood. Anonymous was not a group, anonymity was a tool, was a power.

Paranoia and anonymity go hand in hand. You don't get one without the other, that's why Anonymous isn't a group, it's an idea.

When things happened in the world, anons shared it. I was fourteen when I watched them hang Saddam Hussein. I had already seen Daniel Pearl's beheading, and I would see more over the years. War is hell, and if you think because it's happening overseas it won't scar your children you are lying to yourself.

Anons could coordinate in public without anyone knowing who they were, without having to know who their collaborators were. I saw coordinated doxings and hacks, tracing internet pedophiles back to their home addresses, online struggles between anon pedophiles trying to get children to satisfy their perverse desires and anon hackers trying to alert the child's parents to the dangers of the internet. Within Anonymous threads it seemed most anons just wanted to make someone cry.

Anonymous had no direction, no cohesive ideology, they were just as likely to abuse a child as they were to fight for justice. There was no quality control on the technologically empowered. Spend enough time and determination to learn how to hide and you were in. Some people were hiding from the feds, some were hiding from each other, many from their parents. Some were criminals, some were political dissidents, some were feds, all were closeted. The language in that place, if you took it offline you'd appear as a freak, a lunatic. If you were to meet another anon in person, if they accidentally referenced an anon in-joke and the cat was out of the bag, they would have completely different views of what Anonymous was, because Anonymous had no cohesive meaning. Everyone shared the closet, and nobody knew who anybody else was unless they fucked up and revealed themselves.

To me Anonymous was hope that we could defeat the machine, that we could through sheer force of nerddom break the bloodthirsty monster. To others it was another tool of the machine. To many it was a dark corner where they could procure the utterly illicit.

We trained ourselves not to divulge any personal information whatsoever. We had been trialed by the fires of hell to protect our identities from everyone because the anonymous pits were full of psychos and creeps.

I met an anon creep on a train. He

see **EMPIRE** page 11

Update on Water Street redevelopment area

MARIE
Groundcover contributor

As of May 20, the City of Ypsilanti's Water Street Ad Hoc Citizen's Committee is halfway through its minimum of six meetings. According to a Sept. 2025 Request for Qualifications (RFQ) draft, the Committee is charged with helping identify "capable developer(s) with experience designing, building and constructing mixed-use brownfield projects …" On May 20, the committee held its third meeting, which was titled "Second Visioning Session." Two meetings were previously held in April, and the next three are currently scheduled for 7 p.m., at City Hall, on June 24, July 22, and Aug 26. Links to the previously recorded meetings are available on Ypsilanti's website. Upcoming meetings may be accessed in person, or via zoom at us02web.zoom.us/j/84396004768. The Committee is the newest phase in redevelopment efforts.

In 2025, the City hosted multiple Water Street information sessions, which included a Brownfield session on April 23. According to the recording, Michigan Brownfield Act eligible projects such as Water Street include those that are functionally obsolete, historic and/or have contamination or perceived contamination that prevents areas from being redeveloped. According to AKT Peerless Environmental Services, who was hired to conduct soil testing, site contaminants include lead, asbestos and PCBs. It is understood that the redevelopment area may be eligible for numerous tax credits or incentives, due to historical uses and need for affordable mixed-use units.

2026's Committee came about via City of Ypsilanti's May 6, 2025 Resolution No. 2025-088, Resolution for the Creation of an Ad Hoc Citizen Committee to Develop a RFQ for the Water Street Redevelopment Area. The parcel is currently described in the 2025 RFQ draft as a 38-acre parcel, located at 20 E Michigan Ave. The Water Street Redevelopment Area runs along Michigan Ave. and the Huron River, over the bridge from Ypsilanti's main historic downtown district. The property line extends to Family Dollar, which is the only portion of the site redeveloped thus far.

The committee, according to its March 25, 2026, agenda packet, was created "to assist in creating the RFQ for Water Street property development, ensuring inclusion of community input and values from the City's Community Benefits Ordinance." The resolution calls for the committee to draft an RFQ, and present qualified developer finalists to City Council. An RFQ is similar to a job posting, where applicants present their qualifications, in an attempt to be chosen to create a plan for the property, that considers challenges based on environmental contamination as well as the community's identified needs and wants.

In accordance with the parameters established in the resolution creating the Water Street Committee, there are currently 12 active participants. The staff liaison is Katie Jones, the Manager for Strategic Communications,

see **WATER STREET** page 13

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People in the Neighborhood: Bobbi

JIM CLARK
Groundcover vendor No. 139

Washtenaw Avenue sees between 40,000 and 55,000 cars a day. This means that the most anonymous person in the world, a middle-aged homeless woman, is possibly the most widely known individual in Washtenaw County. People will recognize Bobbi before they will recognize their county commissioner.

If you've traveled Washtenaw Avenue during the morning, afternoon or early evening, you've probably seen her at her post, either near the big Arborland "A," or by the 23 North entrance ramp. Bobbi is a 54-year-old woman who bears a sign that sometimes reads, "Anything helps, even your smile." It's hard to resist giving up that smile when she makes eye contact with you. There is a sweetness in her face that makes you feel okay to smile back. She does her job well.

Before we started the interview, she confided in me that she was nervous. I told her I was too.

"I think yours is gonna make a great story, because, in my opinion, you're a celebrity," I started.

"The most remarkable thing about you is your work ethic. You are out there every day, same hours, doing your job, no matter what the weather is like. You know, that's just impressive. I don't care what you're doing for a living, that's Detroit strong," I continued with enthusiasm.

"Many people have commented on that," Bobbi replied matter-of-factly. "They say it's because I inspire them by just being me."

So that's her job — inspiring us and making us smile.

As big as Ypsi/Ann Arbor is, it's also small. I lived with Bobbi and her partner for a few months at a hospitality house in Ypsilanti. They stayed in their room most of the time, but every now and then we would meet each other in the kitchen. We would chat about mundane things while waiting for the toaster or the microwave.

"You and I actually were housemates at one point," I recalled.

"Yes," replied Bobbi.

"I remember you were very friendly, but also you and your partner Paul kept to yourselves."

"Yes."

"How long have you two been together?"

"I think it's been like six years now."

Bobbi has the vibe of someone you know at work. Someone kind who remembers your birthday and plans the party and has pictures of her kids and kittens all over her desk.

"Where are you staying now?" I asked.

"Sometimes I get lucky enough to get a room, a lot of times I'm in the woods," she answered.

"Do you have people supporting you out there?" I was referring specifically to Community Mental Health PATH program.

"Yes and no," she replied "I've got people I can reach out to if I need to. PATH and I play phone tag a lot. I technically have a tent, but I haven't put it up yet, and I'm glad I haven't because of some of the storms we had."

"When's your birthday?" I asked. "I like to know people's astrological signs."

"January 12th, Capricorn," she answered.

"That explains some of the industry, right?" I offered.

"Yep," Bobbi concurred.

"Your favorite ice cream?" I fired off.

"Probably Reese's Peanut Butter Cup," she fired back. "My favorite candy bar is Outrageous. I actually have a regular that brings me seven to 10 every week, along with a few other things. But the most important fact about me to know is — Mountain Dew and water are the only things I drink."

The Mountain Dew tattoo on her arm is evidence.

Bobbi described the many gifts her regulars bring her: food from great restaurants, clothing, games, books, and of course, large cash donations.

"A young man told me he sold all of his gaming systems because he wanted to help me," she recalled. "He gave me a 'cushiony' envelope. I couldn't bring myself to look at it but when I finally did, it was $2,000. This was in the middle of winter. I got a room for a few weeks and ate well. He saved my life and gave me one at the same time.

"I'm so grateful for all of my regulars and I want to say thank you to each and every one of them," she added.

"Do you get bullied?" I asked.

"You've always got your negative people," she said casually. "I usually try to either make fun or tell them God loves them too, you know," she says with a smile. "When they make their comments," she continues, "it's when they're driving by, not when they're stopped."

"That part — otherwise they might have to engage with you," I noted.

Bobbi agreed and went on to say, "Everyone's got their own opinion on things and it's fine. But don't sit there and drag me down just because you might not like what I do. You don't know who I am. You don't know why I'm here. You don't know what's going on in my life. You don't wanna give, no problem, but why talk down to me?"

If you've traveled Washtenaw Avenue during the morning, afternoon or early evening, you've probably seen Bobbi at her post, either near the big Arborland "A," or by the 23 North entrance ramp.

When I first saw Bobbi several years ago, she held her sign with two hands. Or sometimes one hand held the sign while the other waved a friendly hello. This past winter, I noticed her holding the sign with only one gloved hand; the other one, I assumed, was inside her coat staying warm. As the spring approached and the coat came off, it was revealed that her left arm was missing.

"What happened to your arm?" I asked.

"It started with an infection in my hand," she began. "I was picking up branches for someone and I caught a deep splinter between my thumb and finger. It was in there for quite a while and I didn't realize how far it went down. And then I sprained my wrist. So somebody gave me some CBD rub, and I put that from my wrist up to my elbow. It made my hand start to swell immediately. The swelling started going up my arm. I'm not good with going to the hospital for accidents so I did myself an injustice."

Her arm was amputated shortly after she finally made it to the hospital.

Her arm wasn't the only appendage missing.

"I worked at a hardware store. That is where I lost my first limb (her pointer finger on her right hand) and cut the ligament and chipped a bone in my middle finger."

It was actually an avulsion fracture.

Bobbi went on to tell me, "It can be a bit frustrating, but me being me, I still try to do more than what I need to be doing. I'm not always good at taking help, like when someone wants to help carry my bags, open my pop, or whatnot for me. It's taking a lot for me to let someone else do that."

"So you're stubborn," I teased.

"Yeah, that goes right along with the Capricorn part, right?" she agreed.

"Where are you from? " I asked.

"I was technically born in Topeka, Kansas, but I've lived in Michigan all my life, except for a year and a half when I was a child. I went to Texas when my dad was laid off from work," she replied.

"Were you married?" I asked.

"Yes," she answered, "my husband passed away around eight years ago, supposedly from a blow to the head after a fall."

She isn't quite sure, they weren't together at the time. The only asset they had between them was a house.

"It's really sad because," she said, "we owned this home, and we'd done so much work on it, but he didn't finish the roof, I don't know why. And because he didn't do the roof it made a lot of issues, it was a nightmare. I didn't have the means at the time to do what needed to be done, and the township was already on me for violations.

see **BOBBI** page 15

Photos from Bountiful Bowls and Friends for Life events, provided by Huron Valley Humane Society.

Become a foster at the Humane Society!

Last summer while selling Groundcover newspapers outside the downtown Ypsilanti Library, I ran into a lady walking a dog. She informed me it was a foster dog from the Huron Valley Humane Society. I had never heard of such a thing and we had a conversation on how to foster.

Wendy Welch, Senior Director of Marketing and Communications at Huron Valley Humane Society, explained to me in detail about becoming a foster parent at the Humane Society.

MIKE JONES
Groundcover vendor No. 113

Jones: Could you tell more about the foster program?

Welch: Yes, nearly half of the animals at the Humane Society go through the foster program. It is a life-saving program and I don't use that term lightly; literally a life-saving program.

Jones: How long has the Humane Society been doing the foster program?

Welch: As long as I can remember. It has grown over the years. We look for people to open their homes and their hearts to vulnerable animals because we have a building here, but only so much space. With the help of the community by becoming foster parents it makes space for other animals. This program has been life-changing and life-saving for them.

Jones: Do fostering and adoption work together in some way?

Welch: Yes, in that the whole idea is to have animals live a life outside of the shelter and to get a forever home.

Jones: I heard that the Humane Society provides all the necessities for the Foster Program?

Welch: Yes, we support in every way. We pay for the food, supplies, medication, supportive care and whatever the foster parent might need, other than a loving home.

Jones: Is there anything else you would like our readers to know?

Welch: Yes. It's easy to become a foster parent; we have an online training people can do to let us know how they are interested in fostering because we have foster parents from all ages and different backgrounds. Fostering can last from a few days to several months depending on the needs of the animals and your availability. Extra training is provided for unique circumstances, and medical assistance and questions are handled quickly.

To become a foster, first you watch a 20-minute virtual foster orientation and the VIC How-To Presentation video. Second, you complete the New Foster Application. HSHV will review your Foster Application within 1-7 business days. Once your application is finalized, you will begin to receive Foster Request emails. If any further information is needed, the team will reach out to you.

Whether you are retired, single, part of a family, a couple, in grad school or whatever your circumstances, as long as you can make a commitment to temporarily care for animals and have a suitable household, you can apply to become a foster parent.

You must be at least 18 years old, and all of your own animals must be sterilized and up-to-date on vaccinations. Vaccinations required include: rabies and distemper (cats and dogs). Recommended vaccinations include Bordetella, Lepto, Influenza (dogs), FeLuek (cats). When you complete the foster application, you will upload your vet records with proof of vaccines and sterilization.

They also require that you have experience with the type of animals you want to foster. If you've never had a pet, please consider becoming a regular volunteer as a way to gain some experience handling and caring for animals. For everyone's health and safety, HSHV Foster Parents need to commit to only fostering with HSHV and cannot foster for another organization. A home check may be part of the application process for new fosters.

Who needs foster care?

Animals who are nursing their babies. Animals with injuries, illness or other medical conditions. Animals with special training needs such as those with separation anxiety or who need basic manners training, those who are reactive to other animals. Orphans who need round the clock care and bottle feeding, socialization and those that are not yet old enough for adoption. Animals who need a break from shelter life (those who are not doing well in the shelter environment or have been waiting for adoption for a long time).

Safe Harbor: animals who need temporary housing due to an emergency situation (unexpected hospital stay, house fire, etc.).

Humane Society programs

HSHV offers many core animal services that help animals avoid shelter stays. **Adoption & Rehoming** facilitates the adoption of dogs, cats and small mammals. They also offer private rehoming through the **Home To Home** platform to keep pets out of the shelter during transitions.

Full-service veterinary clinics are open to the public, offering affordable wellness exams, vaccinations, dental care and complex surgeries (e.g., mass removals, amputations). These clinics conduct low-cost spay/neuter surgeries for pet owners and community cat caretakers.

Lost & Found assists the community in reuniting with lost pets or reporting found strays in Washtenaw County.

Emergency Rescue & Cruelty Investigation operates a 24-hour service for sick or injured animals and investigates reports of animal abuse or neglect.

Bountiful Bowls Pet Food Pantry provides free pet food and essential supplies (leashes, collars, litter) to families facing financial hardship.

Friends for Life is tailored support for seniors, including "senior-to-senior" adoptions, veterinary assistance, and help with in-home pet care like dog walking.

There are educational programs for youth including **Camp PAWS**, educational day and week-long camps for children to learn about animal care and empathy. **Junior Volunteers** offers a structured program for youth ages 12–17 to gain hands-on experience in animal welfare. **Tiny Lions Lounge** is a separate "cat cafe" style space for felines that hosts events like "Yoga with Cats" and "Trivia with Cats."

For more information on fostering, please contact foster@hshv.org.

Thanks to the Humane Society of Huron Valley for all that you do for our friends and pets!

Get $5 off on any item by mentioning Groundcover News when visiting Depot Town Cats & Dogs located at 46 E Cross St, Ypsilanti. It is an independent pet supply shop — specializing in pet food, accessories and toys (see page 16)!

The Humane Society of Huron Valley (HSHV) is located at 3100 Cherry Hill Rd, Ann Arbor. They are open for adoptions seven days a week, with hours generally from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. or 7 p.m. They also operate the "Tiny Lions" cat cafe at 5245 Jackson Road in Ann Arbor. Important Detour Notice: Washtenaw County Road Commission will be replacing the Cherry Hill bridge and therefore blocking off Cherry Hill Road (from Plymouth Rd.) completely, starting May thru August. See www.hshv.org/ *for Detour Map.*

➡ **EMPIRE** from page 7

didn't understand why I didn't vibe with his white supremacist shit. I grew up in the same circles he did online, but he assumed everyone there was a white supremacist. In the anonymous places, there was no allowed mention of race, no gender, everyone was anonymous, revealing any such information would be a vulnerability, would be a violation of the entire endeavor. Everyone was white male John Doe. I was young, I didn't see this for what it was at the time: erasure.

By sanitizing all reference to race and gender, anyone trying to discuss race or gender was attacked, vilified, ostracized, exploited, abused. "There are no girls on the internet." "Prove you're a girl, show tits." "I don't believe that's really you, you just grabbed that photo from the internet, post shoe on head." "Lots of girls have posted shoe on head, you saved that from a previous thread, post sharpie in pooper to prove you're real."

This is where "pics or it didn't happen" came from. This is where "Traps" grew up. Kids socialized as boys would post as girls; when the misogyny poured out, and they started asking for pictures, they would try to pass as girls. Their goal: reveal progressively more skin and not get clocked until the final image of genitalia. If they were clocked or if someone was reposting known pictures, someone would post Admiral Akbar saying "It's a Trap!" Whether these "Traps" were of legal age, there was no way to tell other than by looking — some clearly weren't. I was a child myself. Later I started to think about the ramifications.

First the legal threat to myself as I approached adulthood seeing child sexual assault material (CSAM) thrown about. I had the technical knowledge to know that every image I saw in a browser was cached on my computer for some time, and how feds could use that to hurt me should they decide I was being too loud about my radical politics. I now know the feds just download CSAM onto your computer themselves after they arrest you if they feel like getting you murdered in prison.

I looked for other networks, looked for the best encryption, the most anonymous protocols. Besides filesharing hubs, every network I looked at had a pedophile problem. Pedophiles delved deeper into their paranoia, for them it was worth scrubbing their cache and hosting private networks with hardened protocols to procure their vile abuse material. Trying to get the average person to use PGP encrypted email was a non-starter. The only people that would go through that trouble were whistleblowers and journalists. It was easier for me to abandon the anonymous pits and delve deeper into what I actually liked, the computer itself, video games, movies, anime and music. I had found the unrestricted speech I was looking for and the abyss peered back into me.

The CSAM that drove me from those spaces will not drive away the children who don't understand or the predators soliciting it. I realized that completely anonymous uncensored spaces were doomed to become places of abuse. The ideas of total anonymity and the technologically uncensorable lost much of its appeal. Being held accountable by peers is good actually.

Despite my newfound distaste I couldn't deny the need for anonymity and the ability to share sensitive information in the heart of this bloodthirsty empire. The U.S. military guns down innocent people. This isn't speculation, not hyperbole, nor debatable. People were exiled, imprisoned and tortured for bringing us the evidence.

I stood with Anonymous in protest when Chelsea Manning was dragged into Guantanamo Bay and tortured for leaking video evidence of U.S. war crimes to WikiLeaks. I stood with and without a mask.

This empire is fucked. America is a place where it's safer to be a pedophile soliciting sex shows from children than whistleblowing on war crimes. Grok (Elon Musk's AI) generates CSAM on demand now, and protesters are shot in the street. Promote genocide and you can get a cushy job at CNN; promote peace and you're jailed.

I grew up in a pit where kids playing with gender expression were groomed into sex shows for creeps because there was no safe space for them to express their gender, and now I see families of every description partying in the street.

The war is still on. Recently I saw an adult catboy who was outed to his homophobic dad because a nazi talking head used his pictures as an example of the old nazi scare: "moral degeneracy," aka sin.

The United States is attacking Cuba, a bastion of peace, a place of Black liberation, a place where all those families who have been queered by our vile overlords are protected by law.

It's starving the Cuban people, and laying out manufactured consent for hot war. The state department is spreading propaganda claiming Cuba, which is starving, which is suffering horrific blackouts, has 300 drones ready to attack Guantanamo Bay.

Fuck Guantanamo Bay. There's no evidence that Cuba is gearing up to attack Guantanamo, but I'd support them if they were. Guantanamo is a torture site. It's been used to torture whistleblowers and people who dared stand against the machine that raped their little brothers in Abu Graib. The U.S. military has no right operating on Cuban soil. The United States has no right to violate Cuban sovereignty. The United States has no right to continue its blockade of starvation. The United States has no right to wage war on Cuba.

Cuba is a Black nation. Cuba is a Queer nation. On May 17th Cuba celebrated the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia. These are our people. I didn't even know that was a thing! An attack on one of us is an attack on all of us, and the U.S. nazi machine aims to attack all of us, starting with our Black and Brown siblings.

One of the first things the nazis did was burn the sex institute, to burn our history, to burn the evidence that we are not new, we are not abnormal. People are people. It's the nazis that queer us. Cuba has rebuilt the spirit of the sex institute in its Center for Sexual Education, and the nazis have come to burn it once again.

"The U.S.-led blockade is designed not only to economically strangle the Cuban population, but to obscure from lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and trans people living in the imperialist citadel an understanding about what a revolution can achieve in terms of social progress." — Leslie Feinberg

I wish for two things as we celebrate the anniversary of the Stonewall rebellion: I wish for a safe place for people of every queered description to live truthfully and safely, and I wish for a goddamn revolution.

Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover is a non-profit, and paper vendors are self-employed contractors, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following is our **Vendor Code of Conduct**, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

• Groundcover will be distributed for a voluntary donation. I agree not to ask for more than the cover price or solicit donations by any other means.

• When selling Groundcover, I will always have the current biweekly issue of Groundcover available for customer purchase.

• I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper or selling an issue more than 4 weeks old.

• I will wear and display my badge when selling papers and refrain from wearing it or other Groundcover gear when engaged in other activities.

• I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other Groundcover vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.

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from the ARCHIVES

15 YEARS OF NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

Transgender in prison — first-person accounts

AARON ST. GERMAIN
Prison correspondant

"On the elevation of woman the world's redemption and salvation hinge. And not till woman bursts the bonds of her sexual slavery, to which she has ever been subjected, will the world obtain an inkling of what she really is and of her proper place in the economy of nature."
— Eliphas Levi

Being transgender in prison can be a difficult, if not horrible, experience. Transgender inmates are often outcasts in the general population. Still, more and more people are coming out as transgender here. What follows are excerpts from interviews I did with three transgender women who are dear friends to me: Brandilyn, Lilly and Pree. This is a glimpse of who they are as people and their lives in prison.

Aaron: Hey, girls, would you like to tell the readers about yourselves?

Pree: I'm funny, fun, loving, vindictive (LOL) and I have a nice, unique personality.

Brandilyn: I'm 34 and a father of one, small business owner, ordained minister, practicing Wiccan and Tarot card reader; a lead guitarist, backup vocalist and tattoo artist. Doing four to eight years for felonious assault.

Lilly: I'm goofy, outgoing, fun to be around, and I'm sometimes not working with a full deck of cards. I'm an open Transgender and ready to mingle.

Aaron: How long have you been transgender?

Pree: Five years.

Brandilyn: Secretly my whole life. Openly since 2015 and diagnosed in 2018.

Lilly: I've been this way since I came out of my momma, and FYI, she didn't have to push very hard ... I came sashaying out saying, "Heyyy!"

Aaron: How do y'all feel about the progress Michigan has made to better accommodate transgender inmates?

Brandilyn: It's good that the state and overall country are taking gender dysphoria seriously as a mental health issue, not some want or perverse sexual gratification. I'm happy being treated with respect with proper housing, showers and surgical procedures, and the "need" not "want" for feminine clothing and make-up are medical details that allow us these things. They help us be who we truly are.

Lilly: They're doing a shitty job with putting us on the correct dosage of hormones.

Aaron: What would you like to see improved?

Pree: Faster progress.

Brandilyn: We need more state workers trained to work with Transgenders as far as referring to us by the proper pronouns (she/her) and how to properly shake us down.

Lilly: New staff and doctors who know what they are doing. They need to open a unit for LGBTQI inmates and allow consensual sex. We are adults!

Aaron: I don't want to be insensitive but can you tell readers some of the bad things that have happened to you in prison for being transgender?

Pree: I was assaulted in May of 2019 by a corrections officer because of who I am. I'm going to court to press charges and file a civil suit against that officer. Hate does exist!

Brandilyn: I've been housed with known predators and men can be very aggressive in their approach to women. Staff have called me a "dick-sucking fag" and have tried to get me assaulted through third-party means. But some staff have been very supportive of being LGBTQI.

Lilly: They single us out, destroy our property, slander our names! They say we are going to hell and that we amount to nothing. That we are a menace to society and an abomination.

Aaron: What are some of the good things that have happened since being in prison?

Pree: I started hormones and it makes me feel more like a woman.

Brandilyn: Since the state started recognizing us, I've been housed accordingly with other Transgenders instead of with gangbangers and predators.

Lilly: I've met some really cool people, good friends who are going through some of the same issues as me!

Aaron: How do you feel the community can help, not only with LGBTQI in prison, but also on the outside?

Brandilyn: Vote on proposals that help us.

Lilly: Bringing in more staff and doctors who know what they are doing.

Aaron: Thank you for your time — do you have anything you'd like to add? Any words of wisdom for possible LGBTQI people out there reading this?

Brandilyn: Don't be afraid to love yourself and be true to you. There are a lot of people like you and there are communities that will accept you — just reach out and we will reach back with a hug. Stay up, be true, be you.

Lilly: This is to all my girls and boys, "Stay strong sistas and brothas — we're all in this together. It's hard but it gets easier. Be yourself and don't let anyone else tell you who to be. As long as you're happy with yourself, that's all that matters and counts. Love you all!"

Being LGBTQI in prison is a unique experience. We struggle but we survive. Please know we are people, too, and only wish to be seen and accepted as such and judged by what we do, not by who we love. Thank you for reading this!

$2
MEET YOUR VENDOR: MATT WHITE, PAGE 3
GROUNDCOVER
NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP | WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICH.
BLACK LIVES MATTER

Originally published in the July 2020 edition of Groundcover News.

LGBTQ **RESOURCE CORNER**

JIM TOY COMMUNITY CENTER
560 S. Main St, Ann Arbor. 734-995-9867 www.jimtoycenter.org *Information, education, social events and advocacy by and for the Queer and Ally community. Check website for meetings and events.*

EMU LGBT RESOURCE CENTER
354 EMU Student Center, Ypsilanti. 734-487-4149 lgbtrc@emich.edu. *Works to increase students' sense of belonging and contribute to a culture of equity through programming, advocacy and education.*

U-M SPECTRUM CENTER
3200 Michigan Union, 530 South State Street, Ann Arbor. 734-763-4186 spectrumcenter@umich.edu *University of Michigan's gender and sexuality resource center working to enhance campus experiences, increase belonging and help students thrive.*

CORNER HEALTH CENTER
47 N. Huron St., Ypsilanti. 734-484-3600 *Primary, specialty, mental health care and support services. The Corner is committed to providing gender affirming care to young people.*

HIV/AIDS RESOURCE CENTER
3075 Clark Road, Suite 203, Ypsilanti (800) 578 2300, info@hivaidsresource.org

HOTLINES FOR HELP
If you are in crisis or in need of immediate help, please text or call one of the numbers:
The Trevor Project: Call 1-866-488-7386 or Text 678678.
Trans Lifeline: Call 1-877-565-8860
988 Lifeline: Text or Call 988

The Streets of America

CINDY GERE
Groundcover vendor No. 279

The streets of america the streets of america
We see them dancing across the sidewalk.
One by one two by two side step to the left
Side step to the right jump skip out of the way
Mystery who were they in their lifetimes dance
Across our lips and every glance of theirs turns
Into a rageful glare (don't you dare judge me) a
Quickening pace of yours the street
Children of america we ran away long ago.
Then we remember beating hands on broken backs
Beating hearts in broken homes beating souls
Where no one saw or saved the child's cry aloud
You never stopped the pain you saw on the street
Of that little one that one was me we ran as fast
As we could to the streets we did into the arms of
Darkness that wrapped its soul around my
Protection is forever the street children of america
The wondering song of the alley you hear us in
The distant void we stand like sentinels in the
Silence of the day asking for pennies from the pocket.
Blank stairs from cars the hush of the rush zip past
No rings in the soul sand money falls in open palm
Empty stomach of hunger sleep tonight
The street children of america millions strong millions
Gone in one day one can die in a million ways off the street
Pole toke drunk snort junk pass the smash drift off to death
Unremembered unremarkable unknown government
sanctioned
Victims around from the underground to the above ground
The wandering zombies are real drugged up doped
Up from past to present them off to dreamland they go
The streetchildren of america who said? You said is homeless
The nurse the janitor the teacher the hidden hand of
Homeless working day in day out unseen unknown
No one dared to speak of a new age of trumpville is real
Right in the back alleys of america in their cars on
The couch in the shanty they made in the woods
They walk past you every single day standing
There right there in plain sight the unspoken the
Unheard working the streetchildren of america
Your time comes shes here one voice ringing in your head
I'm sorry kid I'm sorry sir I'm sorry man I'm sorry lady
Here's your pink slip your job is done we don't need you
Anymore you step outside on the street its your turn now
To be homeless to walk the endless streets to hear the cries
To see the pain to know it is you today you thought you were
Immune you thought you were better you thought you saved
Enough you thought you trusted your friends your family
Turned you away now you're one of us we slapped on
A name. We gave you our last crust of bread a hug a tear
Join the millions it's your turn now stop that crying no one cries
here
We're a million strong the unidentified gathering power the
unseen
The unknown the anarchists street children of america .....

➡ **WATER STREET** from page 8

Economic Development and Equity, and a lifelong community member. There are three council members: Mayor Nicole Brown, a lifelong resident; Council Member Desiraé Simmons (who moved here in 2014) — Ward 3; and Council Member Steve Wilcoxen (here since 1994) — Ward 2. While up to two non-city council committee members could have been non-residents, all eight are residents. Not only do the committee members cover the minimum composition requirements described in the resolution, they bring a strong spectrum of community values and needed project expertise. One committee member positively affirmed this initial impression by saying there was evidence of "a lot of investment in the community."

Committee members introduced themselves at the first Ad Hoc meeting: Lenore Aerial Ojibway-Gifford has been a resident since 2016 and works at U-M Hatcher Graduate Library; Edward Koryzno has lived in the community for decades and has experience with previous city projects; Chuck Bultman lives along a property line; Juanita House is a lifelong resident; Allison Kruger, resident since 2010, comes with previous Brownfield work experience and is an ecologist; Daron Weatherspoon Sr. is a business owner and lifelong resident; Dallas Ford, resident since 2017, Water Street was their intro to city politics; Diana Gonzales, resident since 2006, grew up in New York City and has a background in permaculture, community restoration and city repair.

Redeveloping Water Street, according to numerous local newspaper articles located in the Ypsilanti Historical Society Archives, began in the late 1990s. The original articulated goal was addressing aging buildings and historical environmental hazards from previous industrial uses of the land. There were several buildings, remnants of industry, and residential buildings that have been cleared.

The property is now a single parcel; however, at the end of the 20th Century, the parcel was still split into numerous properties, and was occupied by a mixture of residential and business structures. While most of the remains of the old structures have been removed, testing evidences contamination consistent with previous industrial uses. Some soil clean-up has reportedly been completed over the past three decades.

The parcel is significant as it has the potential to again contribute a large amount of tax revenue, add space for residential expansion, increase the number of businesses and increase the enjoyment of the river. Property owners are still paying a Water Street millage, levied in 2017, to address budget shortfalls associated with the project's high debt. Market fluctuations and environmental cleanup requirements have been cited as contributing significantly to previous failed redevelopment attempts.

While many current local residents are hopeful about the potential outcome for the site, many long-time residents still recall some of the history of the area, including origins of toxic or industrial pollutants, which include evidence of the old railway used for servicing trains, removed since the turn of the century. Residents have had the privilege of observing the reemergence of some of the threatened and federally protected species still found in Ypsilanti's portion of the Huron River.

Members of the Ad Hoc Committee and residents have described the Water Street area and the park trail as one of Ypsilanti's most valuable assets. While the immediate losses experienced by the displaced residents and business at the start of redevelopment have mirrored more recent displacements of the unhoused, the area has become loved and valued by the community in its current state.

The Water Street area and its wildlife will be greatly impacted by upcoming redevelopment, as well as impacted by upstream projects such as the Pen Paper Dam removal. Water Street has historically been in the flood plain, and photos from multiple previous floods remain in the Ypsilanti Historical Society's Archives. Many previous proposal plans included structures that would again run near the water's edge. While many residents currently appreciate the way the park trail has begun reclaiming its natural beauty, current homeless residents of Ypsilanti's river area regularly find themselves battling the reality of river level fluctuations.

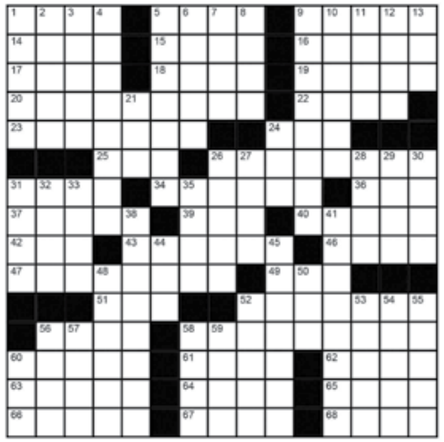
Previous Water Street Committee meetings from 2026 may be found on the City of Ypsilanti website under Water Street Redevelopment Area. Helpful 2025 presentations covering currently relevant topics, including environmental concerns, Brownfield redevelopment projects, and the history of Water Street area may be found there as well.

Ad Hoc meetings to date have focused on introductions, reviewing available reports/presentations, outlining procedural expectations and visioning. More detailed information about the Ad Hoc Committee, or access to live meetings online may be found via the aforementioned link. The next Water Street Ad Hoc Citizen Committee meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Wed., June 24, at City Hall (1 S. Huron, Ypsilanti). The RFQ is expected to be made available to the public in August. It is possible, based on the City's proposed tentative timeline, to have a potential development firm or firms in October. The committee may hold additional meetings beyond the six required, or extend beyond the minimum 180-day requirement.

As of May 21, evidence of continued efforts to clean up and gather data about the property were observed. The higher portion of the fenced-in area, at the end of River Street, has been graded. An AKT Peerless Environmental Services trailer has been moved onto the property. A 21st Century Salvage BobCat and tractor trailer were observed working the site. Evidence of the Sculpture Garden still remains inside the fenced area.

TEES OFF

Tracy Bennett and Victor Fleming



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ACROSS

1. "Yes __,"(polite affirmative)
5. Bit of baby talk
9. "__ looking at you, kid" ("'Casablanca" line)
14. Alan who played Hawkeye Pierce
15. Unspoiled paradise
16. Mushroom
17. Skirt hemmed at the calf
18. Mushroom in ramen
19. Puts on the line, say
20. Peals and tolls, e.g.?
22. Cover with gold
23. Burdensome
24. __ room (play space)
25. Propel, as a shell
26. Non-grenadine part of a Queen Mary cocktail?
31. Guitar gizmo
34. Sports replay effect, for short
36. "Under the __" (song from "The Little Mermaid")
37. Stimulating smell
39. Chopper
40. Prone to complaining
42. Speed Wagon maker
43. Beauregard or Natchitoches, in Louisiana
46. Alleviate
47. Farmer's strategy for hay storage?
49 2022 US and French Open winner Swiatek
51. 2023 Oscar winner Jamie __ Curtis
52. Marked, as with dirty fingers
56. High-quality coffee variety
58. One proposing a toast?
60. Some jeans
61. Be nomadic
62. Bring onto the payroll
63. Super silly
64. Worshipped celebrity
65. "Boola Boola" belters
66. Preppy pullovers
67. Ball brand
68. Lawyers' remuneration

DOWN

1. Cha-cha's kin
2. Iconic Sigourney Weaver film of 1979
3. Befuddle
4. Where sorters may sort
5. Eats up
6 "Ciao!"
7. Judge
8. "No ifs, __ ..."
9. Living "fence"
10. Fortify
11. Stir up, as sediment
12. Scraped (out)
13. Sib who's not a bro
21. Breathtaking reptile
24. Sleep phase
26. Trap on all sides
27. Providers of cheese and wool
28. Atlas section
29. Monocle, e.g.
30. "Mommie Dearest" star Dunaway
31. Atkins diet no-no
32. Domain
33. Accumulate, as resources
35. Spencer who co-hosts "Good Morning America"
38. Pacifies
41. Kitchen commander
44. Brewpub specialty
45. Whom Bill Murray played in 2009's "Zombieland"
48. Pacific weather phenomenon
50. "To Die For" director Van Sant
52. Appreciate, as fine food
53. Artful deception
54. Like some synchronistic experiences
55. Word with cocktail or dinner
56. Casino game
57. Shaped like a watermelon
58. Beam
59. Comstock __ (1850s mining find)
60. Backtalk

Sudoku ★★★★☆☆ 4puz.com

1						4	5	6
		9	1	5		2		
						1		
5	1	2			6			
	8		4		1		6	
			8			9	1	2
		6						
		1		3	2	8		
3	2	8						1

Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS *May 15, 2026 edition*

9	2	6	3	8	1	7	5	4
3	1	5	7	9	4	6	8	2
8	7	4	5	6	2	3	1	9
5	6	8	2	4	9	1	7	3
1	3	9	8	7	5	2	4	6
2	4	7	6	1	3	8	9	5
6	5	1	4	3	8	9	2	7
4	9	3	1	2	7	5	6	8
7	8	2	9	5	6	4	3	1

➡ **BOBBI** from page 9

So I ended up selling it too cheap. I'm kicking myself in the ass for letting it go for peanuts, you know."

Bobbi is a mother of four and a grandmother of seven children.

"I raised a family just outside of Clinton, Michigan," she told me.

"I have my oldest son, my daughter, and then I have twin boys, one of whom was 10 when he died."

"What happened?" I asked.

Bobbi describes a feisty elementary school child who, upon disobeying his mother while on a road trip, was thrown from the back seat of a car in an accident.

"It was really frustrating," she said, "he's the one that likes to sit on the backseat of the vehicle. He really tries to get into things I don't want him to do, so I couldn't make that any better."

"That was a very tough thing to go through," I commented.

Bobbi replied, "I can acknowledge now that I've been through so much that I've distanced myself from a lot of people."

"How long ago was the accident?" I asked.

"About 10 years ago" she answered.

"How long have you been at the corner?" I asked.

She thought for a minute, then said "I don't know, I'd say maybe a little bit, maybe a little bit after that."

If all you see is a drug-addicted loser, and not a woman who lost her child and her husband and her house and wound up on the streets, then you need to check your moral compass.

There was a long pause in our conversation.

"What kinds of jobs have you done?" I asked.

"I used to scrap once upon a time," she began. "When I was 16, I worked at McDonald's in Tecumseh. For a brief time, I was at the Busch's in Clinton. My longest held job was at Somerset Hardware. That's where I lost my finger.

"I used to love doing concrete work. I learned from my husband who did concrete as a trade. There was a job I did, I was quite proud of it. Someone tried to get hold of my husband for doing it and he wasn't available, so I said I'll do it. I borrowed the tools and worked out two 8x10 squares and poured it. It turned out nice. I was really proud," she said, proudly.

"You poured a driveway?" I asked with awe.

"Yep," she replied confidently.

"Nice," I said.

"Did you graduate high school?" I asked.

"No," she replied. "My family bounced around a little when I was in elementary and after my parents divorced, I bounced back and forth between them. Because of the grades and whatnot, I didn't finish 11th grade but, I went back and got my GED.

"How did you do in math?" (As a former math teacher, I had to know.)

"I was surprised," she recalled. "That was one of my highest (scoring) ones that I did out of all the tests. I actually had to repeat one and I could pick whichever one, so I ended up picking the math because I knew I did so well. So, fractions and stuff like that was really, really hard and tough, but I was able to do the GED material myself to get enough to get it back."

Bobbi was referring to elementary arithmetic. She had to teach herself algebra to pass the GED test.

"So you taught yourself algebra?" I asked.

"Yeah," she said with a sheepish grin.

I paused with reverence. "That's impressive," I offered.

I've thought about that a lot since — she taught herself math.

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Dubai chocolate strawberry cups

ADIAN ABED
AYAT SOHOUBAH
U-M student contributors

Ingredients
8 ounces kataifi dough, chopped
or 3 cups Rice Krispies cereal / lightly crushed Mini Wheats cereal
2 tablespoons butter
1 cup pistachio cream or pistachio butter
1.5 cups dark or milk chocolate chips
1 pound fresh strawberries, sliced in halves or quarters
2 to 4 tbsp chopped pistachios (optional)

Directions

If using kataifi dough, chop it into small pieces. Melt the butter in a pan over medium heat and add the kataifi. Cook, stirring often, until it becomes golden brown and crispy. Watch it carefully so it does not burn. Remove from the heat and let it cool slightly. If using Rice Krispies or Mini Wheats instead, you can skip this step.

Place the toasted kataifi, or cereal substitute, in a bowl and mix it with the pistachio cream until evenly combined. Stir until the mixture is well coated and has a crunchy, creamy texture.

Melt the chocolate chips until smooth. You can do this in the microwave in short intervals, stirring between each, or in a heat-safe bowl over simmering water (double boiler). Let it cool just slightly so it is still pourable but not too hot.

Divide the strawberries among four small glasses or dessert cups. Spoon some of the pistachio mixture over the strawberries, then add a layer of melted chocolate. Repeat the layers if needed until the cups are filled. Top with chopped pistachios, if using, and a little extra melted chocolate. Serve right away, or chill briefly before serving.

➡ **SEATTLE** from page 6

reaffirmed in January this year when SPD officers participated in Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board inspections of several high-profile gay bars in Capitol Hill.

Additionally, organizations like the Seattle-based Lavender Rights Project are a reminder that this mantle of radical queer activism has been spearheaded by Black, Brown and Indigenous trans and queer community members. Building on the lineages of Black trans activism, in fall 2023, the group launched a campaign called "We are family, too" to uplift Black trans people and highlight their important role in the Black community.

For Ahmoy, learning about people like the butch lesbian activist Rita "Bo" Brown, who took up arms in the 1970s to wage a guerrilla campaign against the state as part of the George Jackson Brigade in Seattle, helped to reshape his view of what community safety looks like. When he attends events like Trans Pride, he now thinks of all the hidden labor of countless organizers who take community safety into their own hands. He hopes that the new generation of queer people who are becoming politicized take the time to study their history.

"I'm excited for us to figure out different systems to take care of each other," Ahmoy said. "I'm excited for us to wrest control of this narrative. The radical queer movement is here and it's only going to get bigger. But something I want from this movement is an understanding of history so that we don't … try to reinvent the wheel."

This brief summary of Seattle's history of queer radical activism extends an invitation to amplify the narratives of many queer people throughout history who have defined their identity in tandem with the wider struggle for freedom. In studying these histories, we gain agency to choose how we are represented, who we choose to memorialize and what we want to be remembered for.

As queer people, we do not have to accept the marketable depictions of who queer people are that brands try to present as truth. Let us remember that there have always been queer people engaged in resistance and the struggle for liberation.

Parts of this article were omitted for space. Courtesy of Real Change / INSP.ngo

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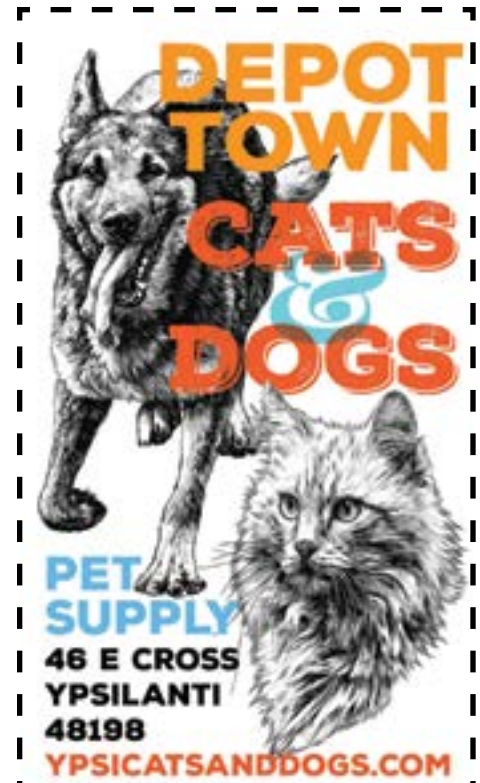

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